



## Video library

### Video production

---

#### Video production in schools – opportunities and limits

Appraisers at the EU Commission had rejected COMCULT applications in 2001 and 2002 above all on grounds that the network had included too little interaction of the student and teacher target groups, criticising the cooperative nature of the network as being too underdeveloped.

To counteract this impression, the production of a joint video film was included in the application and after its approval in 2003 also consistently pursued.

In 2002 and 2003, however, it could not be assumed that all partner schools had departments equipped for multi-media studies or that the use of video hardware and software was part of normal school activities. With two or three exceptions, all COMCULT partner institutions at the commencement of project work were novices and it took them some time to become familiar with the new technology and new content matter.

Only in the second year of the project did production of the video become an impetus for specific interaction between the partner schools, then admittedly to an ever-increasing extent, as the Film Forum witnesses.

#### Joint production of a video – just a means of promoting communication?

When work began on the network, it looked as if producing the video would only be a method of taking up contact between participating schools without contributing any kind of insight on the general topic of the network: “The Formation of Values”.

Work on the film began with an uncritical approach to value systems typical of an everyday normalcy predictable for pupils aged between 14 and 18. In other words, the entire video production right up to its final phase had a strongly pupil-oriented bent.

On the other hand, work on the lessons material used by all was first and foremost directed at teachers and any insights gained in relation to the problems connected with some values affected lessons only gradually, by which time the video had virtually reached completion.

Through the constraints involved in simultaneously having to deal with a level of perception in the case of teachers that was bound to differ from the levels available to pupils, any processing of new insights regarding democracy, social justice and pluralism through the medium of film was unlikely to succeed. A successful outcome could have been anticipated only on the basis of a custom-written script and an effort requiring the services of studio professionals.

#### Video production and fresh insights

That said, a number of insights were gained as a result of the joint video project that, without this new way of learning, would never have come about.

- First of all, a variety of “mini-videos” made by the partner schools allowed others to gain first-hand impressions of one another’s real-life environments, at times over distances of some hundreds of kilometres.
- Information was also exchanged as a result of observing differing forms of conduct and manners among young people as regards, for instance, respect, individuality and environmental awareness.
- Lengthy discussions were sparked among pupils from various countries by episodes dealing with religious behaviour, the value attached to national consciousness, and tolerance towards others.

Generally speaking, the work involved in producing the joint video went quite some way to expanding mental horizons, freeing up minds to think beyond national constraints. As such, positive preconditions have certainly been put in place for future developments calling for resolution at an increasingly pan-European level.

Seen in this way – if the level of expectation is not set too high – the joint production of a video film has proved worthwhile.

---

Translated from the original German by: *Sandy Pirie*